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GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

L EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

A report on opportunities for women
employed by the Corporation of the
City of Hamilton.

Prepared by:

The Hamilton Status of Women Committee

1980

Introduction

Women are People!

This is a fact that is as obvious as stating that the world is round ...

But when it comes to employers' attitudes and practices, women are as much "people" as the world is flat.

In 1977, the Hamilton Status of Women Committee conducted a survey of the staff of the Corporation of the City of Hamilton to determine the status of opportunities for employment and advancement for women. It is evident from the findings of this survey that:

- women are generally better educated and have a greater desire to advance in their careers than do their male counterparts,
- there are inequities on all levels and in all areas which need to be given priority attention in the immediate future,
- women must have more job options and advancement opportunities at all levels,
- serious income discrepancies between men and women performing similar jobs must be eliminated.

The Hamilton Status of Women Committee

In 1971 Hamilton City Council became one of the first municipal governments in Canada to establish an advisory committee on the status of women. To be known as the Hamilton Status of Women Committee, it was considered a bold move at the time and one which would have far reaching effects on the future role of women in the work force in the Hamilton-Wentworth region.

In June of 1977, a Task Force was appointed by the Hamilton Status of Women Committee to investigate its concern that female employees of the City of Hamilton were not enjoying opportunities which were equal to those of their male counterparts.

The Task Force members initially consisted of Anne Redish as Chairperson along with Alderman Ted McMeekin, Jeanne Bernard and Bob Lewis. Mike Pennoch of the Social Planning and Research Council acted as a consultant. Latterly, the Task Force was joined by Alderwoman Pat Ford (now its Co-Chairperson), Robert Ellison and Dr. Roman March. Assistance with the writing of the report has been given in the final stages by Bryan Cripps.

The general objective of the Task Force was to gather statistical information on the basic demographic and socio-economic characteristics of all City of Hamilton employees. This would also include attitudinal patterns relating to their colleagues.

The compilation of the necessary information was to be accomplished by the distribution of a questionnaire which would provide background on 105 different areas of potential concern.

In 1978, Mayor John A. MacDonald requested the co-operation of all City employees in the filling out of the questionnaire. He stated at the time that "the intention is to help establish a base of information so that positive steps can be taken to remedy any overt inequities that may exist in the Corporation."

The results of the survey are now complete and form the basis of this report. The Chairperson and members of the Hamilton Status of Women Committee look forward to working with City Council in the implementation of its recommendations.

General Statistics

Ratio of Female to Male Employees Inconsistent with National Average

Out of a total 2,600 people employed by the City, 916 employees returned questionnaires for analysis. This is considered a remarkably high rate of return, particularly considering the size and complexity of the questionnaire, and underlines the high interest level of the subject matter among both male and female employees.

The Corporation of the City of Hamilton employs approximately 1,732 men and 875 women thus making 33% of the work force female. This ratio of women to men is quite low when compared with the national average where women represent 50% of the total work force.

Of the total male work force, 85% are permanent employees while the comparable figure for women is 62%.

#1 Recommendation

Because of the relatively low percentage of women employed by the City of Hamilton it is recommended that a program be developed to insure a more equitable distribution of men and women in all departments.

The "Need" to Work

Overall Policy of Equal Pay for Equal Work Needed

It will not come as any surprise to learn that women's basic needs are identical to those of men. They need to love and to be loved. They need respect for themselves and they need a sense of selffulfillment. They also have a growing need for financial security.

There are growing numbers of women who are responsible as sole family supporters.

Indicative of the increasing importance of paid work for women is the response to the question, "What is the main source of family income?" While 65% of the men said that they were the only wage earner, 51% of the female employees likewise responded that they were responsible for the family income. This makes any marked differences in wage remuneration all the more keenly felt.

The female need for paid employment is further illustrated by the response to the question "Why are you working?" 19% of the females responded that they were working in order to supplement their spouse's income, while only 2% of the men so replied. The simple need for financial remuneration was almost equal among both men (36%) and women (40%), although the need for personal satisfaction was significantly higher among women (28%) than among men (15%).

#2 Recommendation

Because 51% of the female employees were the sole wage earners for their families, and in accordance with the resolution of Council passed July 29th, 1980, to support such a practise, the Committee recommends the development and distribution to all employees of an overall policy for equal pay for work of equal value and guidelines for its administration.

Salary Discrepancies

Women Used as Cheap Labour!

The age distribution of the employees indicates that more young women under nineteen (20%) are hired than men of an equivalent age (7%). On the other hand, twice as many men over 50 years of age are hired (25%) as women in the same age bracket (12%). This discrepancy accounts for the general low wage levels reported by female employees.

In fact, almost half (49%) of the entire female work force was found to be under the age of twenty-four and their limited working experience is reflected in their wage levels. This compares with 21% of the male employees who fell into the "under twenty-four" age bracket.

This pattern of "youth" for women, coupled with a high percentage of part-time female labour, is reflected in sharply different starting salaries for men and women. Whereas 38% of the men began work with gross salaries of under \$4,000, fully 53% of the women started at this rate. Starting salaries above \$12,000 were granted to 9% of the men, and only 2% of the women.

The pattern is reinforced when one examines the salary rates of 1978:

- 10% of the men earned under \$4,000; 35% of the women!
- 16% of the men earned over \$20,000; 2% of the women!

Among the permanent staff, only 72 men received gross salaries below \$12,000 compared to 115 women. Taking advantage of extremes in age levels, in order to avoid higher salary scales, is an obvious and questionable practice by the City.

Education Level And Salaries

Better Educated Women Penalized!

The level of education attained by employees is somewhat diverse. Women were twice as likely to have completed secondary school (25%) than men (13%). Women employees had also attained higher rates of post-secondary, non-university training than men, while university training was evenly balanced.

Despite the diversity in the levels of education reported by the respondents, starting salaries for females, i.e. in the "under \$4,000 per year" salary bracket, were usually significantly lower than for men, regardless of the level of education achieved. Starting salaries in the \$4,000 to \$7,999 range were more evenly balanced, but in the higher salary ranges, \$8,000 to \$16,000, the percentage of men receiving high starting salaries was generally twice as high as for females.

It would seem that the education level of women is discounted when determining the wage women receive when they start to work for the City of Hamilton.

The same pattern of discounting the level of education of women is evident when one looks at the reported Gross salary being paid in 1978. The discrepancies are even more severe than for starting salaries. Women with the same education level as men are three times more likely to have low income levels (under \$11,999) than men -- while high salaries over \$20,000 were almost exclusively awarded to men, even when women had identical educational levels.

#3 Recommendation

Because the educational level of female employees exceeds (in general) that of male employees a program should be developed to encourage women to advance to the limits of their abilities.

Employee Opportunities

Active Discrimination Against Women!

It would appear that there is sufficient willingness among both male and female employees to accept a greater role for female managers.

While this willingness exists, there is also a strong feeling that women do not have much chance of advancing into managerial positions. This attitude suggests that there is a widely held belief that women are actively discriminated against.

Over 40% of the male and female employees felt that there are barriers to upward advancement within the Corporation.

This perception that discrimination against women employees exists cannot be attributed mainly to negative attitudes among supervisors and senior staff; rather, it appears that management is unwilling to provide specialized internal staff development courses.

#4 Recommendation

Because of the widely held beliefs that women are discriminated against within the Corporation, it is recommended that department heads, deputies and supervisors make a conscious effort to encourage women employees to take upgrading courses and participate in subsidized programs.

Job Descriptions!

Job Descriptions Missing!

Among the three-quarters of the employees who claimed that a job description existed for their positions, 20% of the men and 31% of the female employees had not seen their job description and would like to.

Another source of possible dissatisfaction may arise from the fact that quite a few employees feel that they are asked to carry out responsibilities not related to their job functions and for which they do not receive any reward. For example, 39% of the men and 47% of the women claimed that they are frequently asked to carry out responsibilities not related to their job functions. Of this number, 74% of the men and 83% of the women feel that they have not been rewarded at all. 16% of the men were rewarded with extra pay/lieu time, and 8% of the women. A few were given release from other responsibilities.

#5 Recommendation

Develop and distribute detailed job descriptions for all employees.

Hiring and Promotion Discrimination

Discrimination A Major Concern!

"Do you feel that there have been discriminatory hiring procedures for positions with the City?" 41% of the men and 56% of the women employees agreed. Of those 18% and 24% "strongly" agreed with the statement.

An undercurrent of "felt" injustice in hiring procedures among employees of the City of Hamilton is strong enough to warrant further detailed examination. Such beliefs cannot but have a strong effect upon efficiency of personnel and cause substantial extra costs to taxpayers.

#6 Recommendation

Establish procedures to investigate all claims pertaining to direct and indirect discrimination.

Closed Shop Hiring Should End!

Employees are somewhat ambivalent about the current hiring and promoting procedures. For example, only 15% of the men, but 24% of the women employees, thought that positions within the corporation should be advertised within and outside the Corporation so the best candidate is selected. On the other hand, men were much more likely to take the more self-interested position that openings within the Corporation should be advertised only within, allowing for upward mobility/advancement within the ranks. Strongest support came for the policy that positions should be advertised outside the Corporation only after candidates have been interviewed from within (or if no one applies from within).

On a related issue, while 18% of the male and 30% of the female employees claimed to have been moved to a higher position or classification by means of appointment, only 5% of the men and 3% of the women favoured such a procedure.

The survey revealed mixed preferences about the male/female composition of the selection committees, but there was no single strong preference. Over 50% of the employees felt that the gender composition of the interviewing team did not matter, though 40% of the females indicated there should be an equal male/female split.

#7 Recommendation

Eliminate the closed shop policy of hiring by reviewing all hiring and promotion procedures with a view to providing the City of Hamilton with the highest possible calibre of individuals as future employees.

Conclusion

This report is preliminary in nature and can only be effectively dealt with by City Council acting on the following principal recommendation

Appoint a Director of Equal Opportunities who will have power to develop and communicate throughout the Corporation an equal opportunity policy with detailed guidelines for its implementation.

Qualifications

A degree or diploma in a discipline related to human relations or public administration. Candidates who do not possess a degree should be considered providing they have had extensive work experience in areas of human resources development with some accreditation in related courses. Candidates should have research and report writing skills, strong interpersonal skills as well as the ability to work effectively within all levels of the political/administrative structure of local government.

Duties

The director of equal opportunities would be responsible for the development and effective delivery of a program of equal opportunity for women designed to:

1. Better utilize women's qualifications and skills.
2. Assist women employees to improve their qualifications, skills and potential for advancement within the corporation.
3. Reduce occupational segregation by sex, and
4. Support the appointment of qualified women to more administrative and senior positions.

To this end the director will take a leadership role by advising city council,

through board of control (or a committee of council), of action to be taken to assure the implementation of program objectives, and will advise civic departments on the development and implementation of department programs. The director will also monitor the program's progress and report quarterly to city council and comment on departmental progress reports. In addition the director will work with the personnel department to implement recommendations adopted by council, supervise the office of equal opportunities for women, prepare budgets and allocate funds to meet the training needs of women.

Salary Range: \$25,000 to \$32,000

Concurrent with the appointment of an Equal Rights Director would be the adoption of the recommendations outlined in the foregoing report and listed below:

1. Because of the relatively low percentage of women employed by the City of Hamilton it is recommended that a program be developed to insure a more equitable distribution of men and women in all departments.
2. Because 51% of the female employees were the sole wage earners for their families, and in accordance with the resolution of Council passed July 29th, 1980, to support such a practise, the Committee recommends the development and distribution to all employees of an overall policy for equal pay for work of equal value and guidelines for its administration.
3. Because the educational level of female employees exceeds (in general) that of male employees a program should be developed to encourage women to advance to the limits of their abilities.

4. Because of the widely held beliefs that women are discriminated against within the Corporation, it is recommended that department heads, deputies and supervisors make a conscious effort to encourage women employees to take upgrading courses and participate in subsidized programs.
5. Develop and distribute detailed job descriptions for all employees.
6. Establish procedures to investigate all claims pertaining to direct and indirect discrimination.
7. Eliminate the closed shop policy of hiring by reviewing all hiring and promotion procedures with a view to providing the City of Hamilton with the highest possible calibre of individuals as future employees.

Examples of Implementation

- Revise all recruitment materials to eliminate sex-stereotyping.
- Ensure that all external employment advertising invites both men and women applicants.
- Ensure that part time employees be hired directly through the city's personnel department, be given recall rights if previously satisfactory and be entitled to apply for full time position without prejudice to their present job.
- Work with unions to remove - where practical - sex from position titles.
- Revise application forms to remove questions on sex and marital status and encourage use of initials rather than first names.
- Develop new interview guidelines and circulate to all employment personnel and supervisors.
- Institute a job evaluation plan for all employees.
- All supervisors to review the salaries of men and women in identical position categories and determine whether differences are justified.
- Review annually all starting salaries and position-by-position comparisons, and follow up apparent anomalies with the supervisors concerned.
- Incorporate materials on unconscious discrimination in salary administration into general supervisory training.
- Conduct a separate examination of the pay of contract personnel.
- Provide programme procedures for:
 - (a) recruiting qualified women for any vacancies that may occur
 - (b) implement formal training and job rotation programmes to develop the potential of present female employees.
- Undertake a programme to encourage women to submit applications for higher level positions.
- Undertake an information programme to ensure that managers and supervisors are:
 - (a) aware of the damage which traditional attitudes toward women can cause
 - (b) aware that employee ability cannot be judged on the basis of sex alone
 - (c) fully acquainted with the terms and intent of anti-discrimination legislation
- Undertake a long-term equal opportunity programme, which would phase in the recommended changes over a period of 3 to 4 years.

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